
**© THE QUEEN'S PRINTER FOR
ONTARIO
2000**

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION

**L'IMPRIMEUR DE LA REINE POUR
L'ONTARIO**

REPRODUIT AVEC PERMISSION

micromedia
a division of IHS Canada

20 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario M5C 2N8
Tel.: (416) 362-5211
Toll Free: 1-800-387-2689
Fax: (416) 362-6161
Email: info@micromedia.on.ca

Black History Month

Background 37
ISSN 1206-1514
February 2000
Rick Sage, Librarian



Ontario Legislative Library
(416) 325-3675, Fax (416) 325-3696
e-mail libraryinquiry@ontla.ola.org

Contents

Resources - Web sites

Resources - Press

First Facts

First Arrivals

Government & Politics: Federal

Government & Politics: Provincial

Government & Politics: Municipal

Professions: Legal/Judicial

Professions: Military

Professions: Religion

Professions: Medicine

Professions: Journalism

Professions: Law Enforcement

Order of Canada

February is commonly recognized as Black History Month. Members are often called upon to recognize the history of Ontarians of African descent in speeches in their ridings or in other statements. This Background pulls together a selection of Black Ontarian and Canadian "First Facts" and links to other information sources available online.

The origins of Black History Month can be traced to 1926, when Harvard-educated black historian Carter G. Woodson founded Negro History Week to celebrate the history, contributions and culture of African-Americans. Woodson chose the second week in February for the new festival to link the celebrations to the birth dates of black activist Frederick Douglass (February 7, 1817) and President Abraham Lincoln (February 12, 1809). Fifty years later, as part of the American bi-centennial celebrations in 1976, the week was expanded to become National Black History month.

In Canada, official recognition first came in the early 1950's when the Canadian Negro Women's Association successfully petitioned the Toronto city council to acknowledge the week. This initial acceptance apparently faded over the years. It was not until the late 1970's that the council, after lobbying by the newly formed Ontario Black History Society, followed the example of the United States and declared that henceforth February would be known as Black History Month.

In Ontario, provincial recognition came in January 1993 when Lieutenant Governor Hal Jackman issued the following proclamation:

"WHEREAS throughout its long history, Ontario has been characterized by its diverse and distinctive culture;
AND WHEREAS our society's fundamental strength lies in its unique cultural pluralism;
AND WHEREAS from the time of its

Resources - Web Sites

African Canadian Dramatic Arts Society
<http://www.cyberus.ca/~acdas/>

African Canadian On-Line
<http://www.yorku.ca/research/aconline/>

African Canadian Services Division - Nova Scotia Education and Culture
<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/educ/program/acs/>

Anti-Slavery Act - Upper Canada
<http://www.gov.on.ca/MCZCR/archives/english/exhibits/humnrts/1793slaves.htm>

Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia
[<http://www.bccns.com/>]

Black Historical & Cultural Society of British Columbia
[<http://www.multinova.com/canroots/blackframes/index.htm>]

Black History in Guelph and Wellington County
[<http://www.museum.guelph.on.ca/bhintro.htm>], Guelph Museums

Black History Month Association
[<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Heritage/BHMA/>]

Black Studies Centre
[<http://www.black-studies.org/>]

Black Voice
[<http://www.blackvoice.com/>]

British Columbia Black History Awareness Society
[<http://www.islandnet.com/~bcbhas/index.htm>]

Buxton National Historic Site
[<http://www.ciaccess.com/~jdnwby/Default.htm>]

Menare Foundation
[<http://www.ugrr.org/wwwhome.html>]

Nova Scotian Black Cultural History
[<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/educ/museum/arch/blkdata.htm>]

Ontario Black History Society
[<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/obho/>]

Share
[<http://www.sharenews.com/>].
"Canada's Largest Ethnic Newspaper"

Toronto Celebrates Black History Month
[<http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/blackhistory/index.htm>]

Resources - Press

Twenty-eight days of history; Black History Month
Hamilton Spectator, Feb-04/2000

establishment, people of African descent have made significant contributions to the development of the province;
AND WHEREAS the Black community continues to play a vital role within the social and cultural mosaic that is Ontario;
AND WHEREAS 1993 is the 200th anniversary of the passage of legislation prohibiting the importation of slaves into Upper Canada and providing for the gradual abolition of slavery;
THEREFORE a proclamation be issued naming the month of FEBRUARY 1993 Black History Month in Ontario; a time to celebrate the uniqueness, vitality and continuing contribution of the Black community in Ontario."

National recognition followed on December 14, 1995 when Jean Augustine, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, requested, and received, the unanimous agreement of the House of Commons to the following motion:

"That this House take note of the important contribution of black Canadians to the settlement, growth and development of Canada, the diversity of the black community in Canada and its importance to the history of this country, and recognize February as black history month."

Black Canadian "First Facts"

First Arrivals

It is not possible to say when the first person of African descent arrived in what is now Canada. These were among the earliest:

Name Unknown

Date of arrival unknown. Died of scurvy during the winter of 1606-7 at Port Royal, Acadia.

Source: Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. I, p. 452.

Mathieu de Coste (Matthew de Costa)

Date of arrival unknown. "[T]he negro of the Sieur [Pierre] Du Gua de Monts, who is supposed to have served in Acadia around 1608."

Sources: Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. I, p. 452.
Ontario Black History Society

Olivier Le Jeune

Arrived 1628. Brought on an English ship at a very young age. Sold to a French colonist. Died 1654.

Source: Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. I, p. 452.

Government & Politics: Federal

Black scholars mourn loss of store
Toronto Star, Feb-03/2000

Black History Month time; for
celebration, reflection;
Toronto Star, Feb-01/2000

Black History is Still a Mystery
Toronto Sun, Jan-31/2000

Shame and rage
National Post, Jan-15/2000

Torontonians Who Make A
Difference
Toronto Sun, Dec-13/1999

Church kicks off 'brick fundraiser'
The Windsor Star, Dec-11 1999

Cabinet Minister (Male) – Lincoln MacCaulay Alexander
(P.C. / Hamilton West). Appointed: Minister of Labour, June 4, 1979
Sources: Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1979.
Hill, Lawrence. Trials and Triumphs: The Story of the African-Canadians.
Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1993, p. 44.

Senator (Female) - Anne Claire Cools
(Liberal). Appointed: January 13, 1984.
Sources: Canadian Parliamentary Review, Spring 1991. Canadian
Parliamentary Guide, 1985, p.183. Biography. Canada. Senate.

Senator (Male) - Donald H. Oliver
(P.C.). Appointed: September 7, 1990.
Sources: The Canadian Encyclopedia. 1999, p. 260. Biography, Canada. Senate.

Member of Parliament (Male) - Lincoln MacCauley Alexander

(P.C. / Hamilton West). Elected: General election June 25, 1968.
Sources: The Canadian Encyclopedia, Vol.1, p.60. Canadian Parliamentary
Guide, 1969. Biography, Ontario Lieutenant Governor website.

Member of Parliament (Female) - Jean Augustine (Liberal / Etobicoke-Lakeshore),
Sources: Ontario Times, 7:3, December 1993. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1994.

Government & Politics: Provincial

Lieutenant Governor (Canada) - Lincoln MacCaulay Alexander.
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario: September 20, 1985 - December 11, 1991.
Sources: The Canadian Encyclopedia, Vol.1, p.60. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1994, p.35. Toronto
Star, November 20, 1991, p.A1. Biography, Ontario Lieutenant Governor website.

Member of a Legislature (Canada - Male) - Leonard Braithwaite
(Liberal / Etobicoke). Elected: General election September 25, 1963.
Sources: Canadian Who's Who, 1988, p.98. Globe & Mail, September 26, 1963.

Member of a Legislature (Canada - Female) – Rosemary Brown
(NDP / Vancouver-Burrard). Elected to the British Columbia Legislature: General
election August 30, 1972.
Sources: Canadian Encyclopedia, Vol.1, p. 238. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1973.

Candidate in an election (Canada) – Alfred Shadd.
(Conservative / Kinistino). Ran in Saskatchewan's first provincial general election in
1905 and lost by 52 votes to a Liberal friend, Thomas Sanderson.
Sources: Hill, Lawrence. Trials and Triumphs, 1993. Ontario Black History Society

Cabinet Minister (Ontario - Male) - Alvin Frederick Curling
(Liberal / Scarborough North). Served as Minister of Housing from June 26, 1985 to
September 29, 1987.
Sources: Ontario. Legislative Library. Checklist of Ontario Ministers. [Toronto: The Library, 1989]

Cabinet Minister (Ontario - Female) - Zanana Akande
(NDP / St. Andrew-St. Patrick). Served as Minister of Community and Social
Services from October 1, 1990 - October 10, 1991.
Source: Ontario. Legislative Library. Checklist of Ontario Ministers. [Toronto: The Library, 1989]

Member of a Legislature (Ontario - Male) - Leonard Braithwaite

(Liberal / Etobicoke). Elected: General election September 25, 1963.

Sources: *Canadian Who's Who*, 1988, p.98. *Globe & Mail*, September 26, 1963.

Member of a Legislature (Ontario - Female) - Zanana Akande

(NDP / St. Andrew-St. Patrick). Elected: General election September 6, 1990.

Source: *Toronto Star*, September 12, 1990.

Candidate in an election (Ontario) - Stanley Grizzle

(CCF / York East). Ran in the general election of June 11, 1959 and placed third with 9,122 votes.

Sources: *Identity: The Black Experience in Canada*. Ont. Educational Communications Authority, 1979, p. 99. Ontario, Chief Election Officer. *Return from the Records ... General Election ... 1959*. Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1959.

Government & Politics: Municipal

Mayor (Canada - Male) - Dr. Monestime Saint Fermin.

Elected mayor of Mattawa, Ontario in 1964.

Source: *Identity: The Black Experience in Canada*. 1979, p. 98.

Mayor (Canada - Female) - Daurene Lewis.

Elected Mayor of Anapolis Royal, Nova Scotia from 1984 to 1988.

Source: Hill, Lawrence. *Trials and Triumphs*. 1993, p. 43.

Municipal politician (Ontario) - Abraham Shadd.

Elected to the council of Raleigh, Ontario (Canada West) in 1859.

Source: Hill, Lawrence. *Trials and Triumphs*. 1993, p. 54.

Municipal politician (Toronto, Ontario) - William Peyton Hubbard.

Elected to the city council from 1894 to 1907 and again in 1913.

Sources: Hill, Lawrence. *Trials and Triumphs*. 1993, p. 42-43.

Ontario Black History Society

Professions: Legal/Judicial

Chief Justice (Federal Court of Canada) - Julius Alexander Isaac.

Appointed: December 23, 1991.

Sources: *Toronto Star*, December 24, 1991, p. A3. Ontario Black History Society

Judge (Supreme Court of Ontario) - Julius Alexander Isaac.

Appointed: February 22, 1989.

Sources: *Law Times*, Sept. 24-30, 1990, Vol.1 (32), p.19. *Toronto Star*, February 23, 1989, p. A3.

Judge (Ontario Provincial Court - Male) - Maurice Alexander Charles.

Appointed: 1969.

Sources: *Identity: The Black Experience in Canada*. 1979, p. 99. *The Lawyers Weekly*, June 14, 1996.

Judge (Ontario Provincial Court - Female) - Micheline Rawlins.

Appointed: October, 1992.

Source: *Windsor Star*, February 1, 1993, p. A3.

Lawyer (Canada - Male) - Delos Rogest Davies.

Called to the bar of Ontario in 1886. Note: While most sources list Mr. Davies as the first black lawyer in Canada, his entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* suggests that Robert Sutherland of Walkerton, Ontario and Abraham Beverley Walker of St. John may have preceded him.

Sources: *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Vol. XIV, p. 274-275.

Talbot, Lance C. "History of Blacks in the Law Society of Upper Canada" *Gazette*. XXIV, p. 65-70.

Law Times, October 15, 1990, p.3.

Ontario Black History Society

Lawyer (Canada - Female) - Violet Henry (nee King).

Called to the Bar of Alberta, 1954.

Source: Identity: *The Black Experience in Canada*. 1979, p. 98.

Professions: Military**First black Canadian to win the Victoria Cross – William Hall.**

Born: Horton Bluff, Hants County, Nova Scotia, April 28, 1827. While serving with the Royal Navy Hall was seconded to the Naval Brigade during the Indian Mutiny. He won the V.C. at the storming of Lucknow on November 16, 1857.

Sources: *Valiant Men: Canada's Victoria Cross and George Cross Winners*. Hakkert: Toronto, 1973.

Canada's V.C.'s. McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1956. Ontario Black History Society

Professions: Religion**Moderator of the United Church of Canada – Reverend Dr. Wilbur Howard.**

Appointed: 1974.

Source: Identity: *The Black Experience in Canada*. 1979, p. 99.

Professions: Medicine**Doctor (Canada) - Anderson Ruffin Abbott.**

Born: Toronto, 1837. Received licence to practise medicine from the Medical Board of Upper Canada, 1861. Admitted to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, 1871.

Sources: Hill, Lawrence. *Trials and Triumphs*. 1993, p. 55. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. XIV, p. 4

Professions: Journalism**First black newspaper woman in North America - Mary Ann Shadd.**

Published and edited the anti-slavery newspaper *Provincial Freeman* in Chatham, Ontario (Canada West) between 1853 and 1858.

Sources: *Toronto Star*, February 12, 1981. Hill, Lawrence. *Trials and Triumphs*. 1993, p. 44. Ontario Black History Society

Professions: Law Enforcement**First black police officer in Toronto, Ontario – Lawrence McLarty.**

Hired: 1959.

Source: Identity: *The Black Experience in Canada*. 1979, p. 98.

First black police officer in Regina, Saskatchewan – David Pollanis.

Hired: 1969.

Source: Identity: *The Black Experience in Canada*. 1979, p. 99.

First black police officer in Montreal, Quebec – Edouard Anglade.

Hired: 1974.

Source: Identity: *The Black Experience in Canada*. 1979, p. 99.

Order of Canada**Isaac C. Phills, O.C. (Officer).**

Appointed: July 6, 1967. A Cape Breton steel worker of West Indian origin, who raised a large family and despite many difficulties, gave them a good education and

start in life and set a fine example in the community.

Sources: **Identity: The Black Experience in Canada**. 1979, p. 98. **Order of Canada: Companions, Officers, Members**, July 1980.

[About Our Products / Disclaimer](#)

[Library Home](#)

Copyright (c) 2000: Office of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.